

## ***Draft Summary Report of the Second Quarter 2014 Advisory Group Meeting Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS)***

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*Convened by conference call on June 5, 2014 (2:00 p.m. EDT), from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC.*

### **I. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Karen A. Staha, Chief of the Division of Strategic Planning and Performance for ETA's Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), welcomed the WRIS and WRIS2 Advisory Group representatives to the Second Quarter 2014 conference call meeting. She introduced participating staff members from ETA and ETLIS (Employment Training and Legal Services), as well as the technical assistance contractors Xerox and CDS<sup>2</sup>, and briefly discussed the agenda topics. In the interest of ensuring adequate time was available for discussion, rather than calling a formal roll Ms. Staha asked attendees to confirm their attendance, and note if they represented a SUIA or PACIA, through an e-mail to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

Ms. Staha reported that Portia Wu was confirmed as the new Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration in April and was fully engaged in ETA programs and initiatives. Assistant Secretary Wu brings a wealth of experience to ETA and had served recently as a Special Assistant to the President for labor and workforce policy and previously with the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee of the U.S. Senate.

Ms. Staha also provided an update for the state workforce representatives involved with PY 2014 performance negotiations. Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 25-13 was issued in May 15 and negotiations are to be concluded by June 30. The TEGL, Negotiating Performance Goals for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title 1B Programs and Wagner-Peyser Act Funded Activities for Program Year (PY) 2014, is available on the ETA Web site at: [http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=6943](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=6943).

Ms. Staha briefly discussed the current status of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and related performance measures and also provided information on the recent Workforce Data Quality Initiative's (WDQI) Fourth Round. In response to Ms. Staha's invitation to the representatives to outline their use of wage record data to assess eligible training providers, brief state-specific perspectives and activities were shared by Alabama, Indiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oregon Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin. In closing, Ms. Staha also invited others to share their insights and identified barriers through an e-mail to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

### **II. Adoption of the First Quarter 2014 Summary Report**

Ms. Staha briefly reviewed the First Quarter 2014 Summary Report of the WRIS and WRIS2 Advisory Group meeting on March 25. The Summary Report had been distributed previously to the Advisory Group representatives for review and no comments or corrections had been received. Following motions to approve by Advisory Group representatives, the First Quarter 2014 Summary Report was adopted without objection.

### **III. WRIS2 Membership and Operations Status**

John Glen (Oregon), WRIS2 Workgroup Chairman, and Heather Parker, ETA Federal Program Officer for WRIS2, WRIS and CRIS, outlined the status of the opt-in WRIS2 expanded data sharing initiative and welcomed Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development as the newest member. To date, 35 states and Puerto Rico have signed the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement. Mr. Glen reported the WRIS-WRIS2 Town Hall in early May had included a discussion of WRIS2 and that the PowerPoint was available to all state representatives by request through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov). The WRIS2 initiative allows aggregate data to be shared with Third Party Entities (TPE), which are defined in the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement as any public body, agency, or private career school required by law to meet state and/or Federal performance measures. In closing, Ms. Parker thanked the WRIS2 Workgroup (Missouri, Oregon, Utah and Texas) for their continuing leadership and support to newer members and suggested that Advisory Group representatives visit the ETA WRIS2 Web [site](http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris_2.cfm) for key information including the WRIS2 Agreement and membership map. The site is available at: [http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris\\_2.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/performance/wris_2.cfm)

### **IV. WRIS2 Agreement Sec. VII.C: Executive Orders (*Correction*)**

Ms. Parker reported that ETA wished to correct an element of WRIS2 information discussed during the May WRIS-WRIS 2 Town Hall WebEx. The WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement, at Section VII. *Operation of WRIS2* C.1 reads that WRIS2 may be used "to obtain wage data to prepare Aggregate Statistical Reports and analyses to satisfy the reporting and performance requirements under Federal or state legislation, or Federal or state regulation..." The WRIS2 Agreement provision at Section VII.C.1 does not include Executive Orders, as mentioned incorrectly during the Town Hall. Ms. Parker indicated that she would be pleased to discuss the correction regarding Executive Orders in more detail with interested states and asked that a request e-mail be sent through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

### **V. WRIS and WRIS2 PACIA and SUIA Training Opportunities**

Ms. Parker provided an overview of recent and upcoming WRIS-WRIS2 training opportunities for SUIA, PACIA and IT staff members. The spring 2014 Town Hall discussions included presentations by Adam Leonard (TX), Dan Holton (TN), John Glen (OR) and ETA. During the Town Hall, several states contributed to the discussions regarding disclosure of wage data from WRIS and WRIS2 and 20 CFR Part 603.5 *Exceptions to Confidentiality Requirements* and Ms. Parker thanked them again for sharing their perspectives. Approximately 94 staff members from 43 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico attended the May Town Hall, and representatives were encouraged to submit discussion topics for the autumn Town Hall through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

Ms. Parker noted that a WRIS or WRIS2 Orientation could be provided to any state for newly appointed as well as experienced staff members. The most recent Orientation Webinars have been provided to Vermont and Puerto Rico and another is scheduled for the District of Columbia

on June 10. The 2014 annual *Confidentiality Compliance and Incident Response Review* Webinar will be presented again during August or September for staff members who could not participate in January.

## **VI. Quarterly Report: WRIS and WRIS2 Technical Operations**

Ms. Parker introduced Amanda Gohl, Account Manager for Xerox, who discussed the WRIS and WRIS2 Quarterly Technical Operations Reviews that had been e-mailed to the Advisory Group representatives in advance of the meeting. Ms. Gohl reported that data trends are consistent and in line with the trends seen during the past decade of WRIS operations. Ms. Gohl indicated that the current WRIS Distributed Database Index (DDBI) was made available on April 14 and includes data from 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Ms. Gohl further reviewed the significant security and encryption processes that are in place throughout the system and reported that the 2013 audit had been completed. The 2014 audit will be undertaken this summer. In response to questions from Alabama and Rhode Island, Ms. Gohl and Ms. Parker outlined the separate applications for WRIS and for WRIS2, including separate log-ins and separate DDBIs, to ensure there is no cross-over of data. In closing, Ms. Gohl invited representatives to e-mail follow-on technical questions through [WRIS.support@xerox.com](mailto:WRIS.support@xerox.com) or [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov); and, reminded representatives that the number for WRIS and WRIS2 technical support is: 800.327.9250 Option 2.

## **VII. Tennessee: WRIS2 Third Party Entity (TPE) Proposal**

Ms. Parker introduced Dan Holton, Assistant Administrator for the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD), to continue discussion of the WRIS2 proposal Tennessee had introduced during the May Town Hall. Ms. Parker noted that the Tennessee proposal had been e-mailed to the representatives in advance for informational purposes and that no vote would be taken during the meeting. David Wright, Associate Executive Director for Planning, Policy and Research of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), joined Mr. Holton in making the presentation and responding to questions. The THEC will participate as a Third Party Entity (TPE) and a draft of the TPE agreement had been distributed as a reference for the discussions. Dr. Wright indicated that WRIS2 would assist THEC with carrying out the required performance reporting requirements of the LEAP (Labor Education Alignment Program) Act, as codified in Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, 2010, as well as providing an enhancement to the THEC Tennessee Higher Education Outcomes (THEO) project. For more detailed information, Mr. Holton and Dr. Wright invited representatives to contact them directly or through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov).

## **VIII. Additional Business and Discussion**

Ms. Staha invited the Advisory Group representatives to raise additional topics for discussion. For scheduling the Third Quarter 2014 WRIS and WRIS2 Advisory Group meeting in September, she asked that members let ETA know through [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov) if there are dates that should not be considered due to existing conflicts. ETA will provide the September date as soon as possible.

In closing, Ms. Parker requested that representatives of states that are not participating in the WRIS2 initiative e-mail [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov) to share the reasons for their decisions through an e-mail to [WRIS@dol.gov](mailto:WRIS@dol.gov). She noted that ETA was particularly interested in learning about statutory constraints and agency technical and operational barriers.

ETA adjourned the WRIS and WRIS2 First Quarter 2014 conference call meeting at 3:15 pm.